

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) A method of applying a plurality of parallel reinforcing straps in predetermined spaced locations on a bulk box while the box is in a knocked-down or flattened condition, comprising the steps of:

providing a machine having a plurality of spaced apart strapping head assemblies each 5 operable to apply a reinforcing strap to the flattened box at a predetermined different location on the box;

moving a box through the machine and past the strapping head assemblies;

10 stopping the flattened box in a predetermined position at each strapping head assembly to apply a strap to the flattened box in a position different from the position of a strap applied at a preceding strapping head assembly, but parallel thereto, and then advancing the box to a next strapping head assembly for application of a further strap, until the desired number of straps have been applied;

15 operating each strapping head assembly while the flattened box is stopped to loop a strap around the flattened box container, apply tension to the strapping, secure the strapping to itself to form a loop of strapping closely encircling the flattened box container, and cut the loop from the supply, whereby a box erected from the flattened box has a plurality of spaced apart, parallel reinforcing straps pre-applied thereto.

17. (Currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 16, including the steps of:

simultaneously moving a plurality of boxes through the machine;

stopping all of the boxes at the same time, with each box positioned at a strapping head assembly; and

5 simultaneously operating all strapping head assemblies to simultaneously apply straps to all of the boxes, with each strap being applied in a different position and parallel to the other straps.

18. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 17, including the steps of:
providing a plurality of pairs of strapping head assemblies arranged in series in the
machine; and
simultaneously applying a pair of straps to each box as the boxes are stopped.

19. (New) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein:
each pair of strapping head assemblies applies a pair of straps in spaced, interspersed
relationship with other straps, whereby at least one strap of a previously applied pair of straps is
located between the straps of a later applied pair of straps.